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ABSTRACT

Racial residential segregation persists at high levels in all American cities with sizeable black populations. In 1980, 28 cities with black populations of more than 100,000 were home for 9.7 million blacks, more than a third of all American blacks. The average segregation index score for these cities was 81, when 100 means that every city block is either 100 percent black or 0 percent black. Neither the size of the black population nor its percentage of the total city population can be used to predict how segregated a city is. Racial exposure measures, which calculate the extent to which blacks are exposed to nonblack residents in their home neighborhoods, and similarly, nonblacks to black residents, also indicate the extent of racial segregation in the 28 cities. The 1980 average segregation index score has declined from the 87 of 1970, thus continuing the trend that was apparent in the 1960s. More rapid declines are possible, as shown by 8 individual city scores which declined by over 10 points. Seven cities, however, failed to decline by more than two points. Reasons for the differences are not known. (CMG)

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RACIAL RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION, 28 CITIES, 1970-1980 *1

Karl Taeuber

March, 1983

Racial residential segregation persists at high levels in all American cities that have sizable black populations. In 1980, the 28 cities that had a black population greater than 100,000 were home for 9.7 million blacks, more than one-third of the nation's total. The average segregation index score calculated from 1980 census data for these 28 cities was 81. *2 The segregation index (technically the index of dissimilarity) ranges from 100 when every city block is either 100% black or 0% black, to zero when every city block has the same ratio of blacks to total as the entire city. Segregation indices and other measures for the 28 cities are listed in Table 1.

Two of these cities have segregation indices above 90: Chicago (92) and Cleveland (91). Fifteen cities have indices in the 80s and 9 cities have indices in the 70s. Two have lower indices: Gary (68) and Oakland (59).

Size of black population is no predictor of how segregated a city is. New York City, with a black population of 1.8 million, is 24th on the list with an index of 75. Chicago, with a black population of 1.2 million, tops the list with an index of 92. Other cities with more than one-half million black population in 1980 are Detroit (759,000 blacks; index of 73), Philadelphia (639,000; 88), and Los Angeles (505,000; 81).

Neither is black percentage a predictor of the level of residential segregation. Among cities with a black majority, Atlanta (67% black; index of 86) and Baltimore (55% black; also 86) have the fifth and sixth highest segregation indices, whereas Detroit (63% black; 73) and Gary (71% black; 68) are 26th and 27th among the 28 cities.

Although all 28 cities are racially segregated, there is variation among the cities in some of the manifestations of segregation. Extreme racial separation is indicated by complete racial homogeneity among residents of individual city blocks. Birmingham tops this list with 46% of its blacks living in blocks occupied solely by blacks. Other cities above 30% on this measure are Jacksonville, Memphis, and Richmond. In eight cities, fewer than 10% of blacks live in racially homogeneous blocks; New York is at the bottom of the list with only 1.5%.

Among nonblacks, living in racially homogenous blocks is typically more common. Cleveland and St. Louis top the list with 67% living in blocks with no black residents. The percentage drops below 10 in only two cities, Washington and Oakland. The definition of racial homogeneity used for these data--100% black or 100% nonblack--is quite stringent. If the definition were eased, so that blocks with fewer than 5% of the other race were still regarded as homogeneous, the percentages of blacks and nonblacks living in racially homogeneous blocks would be much higher than those cited.

Racial "exposure" measures are another indicator of racial separation in American cities. If we suppose that the city block on

which a person lives constitutes his home neighborhood, we may ask to what extent are blacks exposed to nonblack residents in their home neighborhoods? Under complete segregation, exposure of blacks to nonblacks would be zero. Under complete integration, each black would be exposed to the city proportion of nonblacks. The "exposure index" is the average percentage nonblack for black residents. Among the 28 cities, the exposure of blacks to nonblacks ranges from 31% (Columbus) to 7% (Atlanta). Other cities with an index below 10% are Baltimore, Birmingham, Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, and Washington. In all of these cities, there are enough nonblacks that the index would be 30% or higher if there were complete residential integration.

There is a corresponding exposure index to measure the exposure of nonblacks to blacks. It is the average percentage of blacks on the block, calculated for nonblack residents. Among the 28 cities, the exposure of nonblacks to blacks ranges from 3% (Gary) to 5% (Chicago). Fifteen cities have an index below 10%, while only four have an index above 20%.

Previous studies of the trend in racial residential segregation have described changes during the period 1940 to 1970. [3] During the 1940s, segregation indices persisted at high levels in northern cities and typically increased in southern cities. During the 1950s, residential segregation in southern cities continued to intensify, while many northern cities experienced small declines. During the 1960s, small reductions in segregation were common among cities in all regions.

Knowledgeable observers have different opinions about the trend in residential segregation during the 1970s. Some expected the 1980 segregation indices to reveal increases since 1970. This anticipation was based on the obvious maintenance of central city black populations, rapid white population departure from central cities to suburbs, the continuation of institutional forces that promote and maintain racial segregation in housing, the persistence of racial prejudice, and the low political and financial priority put on fair housing efforts.

Other students of residential segregation expected the data to reveal that the 1970s had brought sharper declines than prevailed during the 1960s. Attitude surveys suggested declining levels of racial prejudice. The 1968 federal fair housing law and the Supreme Court decision in the same year declaring all housing discrimination illegal provided new legal recourse. These, together with many state and local fair housing laws and organizations, seemed during the 1970s to be having some influence in opening up the suburbs and reducing white panic selling in racially mixed neighborhoods. The 1970s also witnessed a sharp decline in rates of black population growth in most cities, thus reducing the pent-up demand for housing and slowing the traditional rapid racial transition in areas newly opened up to blacks.

Neither expectation was fully borne out. In 1970, the average segregation index for the 28 cities was 87. The decline to 81 in 1980 continues the trend that was apparent in the 1960s, but without much acceleration. The pattern of decline in both decades may be

characterized as a slow downward drift. Declines of 6 points a decade for the next 50 years would still leave the average city with an index above 50.

The trend data for 1970 to 1980 demonstrate the possibility of rapid declines. Eight of the 28 cities had declines of more than 10 points. Dallas, Jacksonville, Houston, Nashville, and Richmond all were above 90 in 1970 and declined more than 10 points. Columbus (Ohio), Gary, and Oakland also declined more than 10 points, even though their 1970 scores were already below average. Research should be directed to discerning what accounts for these large declines, and why 7 other cities failed to decline by more than 2 points.

Footnotes

*1 This report was prepared for the Citizens' Commission on Civil Rights (c/o Center for Natior l Policy Review, Catholic University, Washington D.C. 20064) and appears, with a shorter title, as an appendix in their report, "A Decent Home. . . . A Report on the Continuing Failure of the Federal Government to Provide Equal Housing Opportunity," April, 1983. It is based on preliminary results from the research project, "The Trend in Residential Segregation," supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. SES 8025541, with further help from Population Research Center Grant HD05876-12 from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to the Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF, NICHD, or Citizens' Commission.

*2 The data presented are based on 1980 census final population counts classified by race, as released on the P.L. 94-171 computer tape files. Census data are imperfect; no adjustments have been made for undercount or other errors. Racial identification is based on self-designation; the reported categories are here collapsed into black and nonblack. Nonblack includes various "races" tallied for census purposes, such as Chinese, Vietnamese, and Native Americans, as well as those recorded as white. In most of the 24 cities, nearly all

"nonblacks" are "whites." In a few, such as Oakland and Los Angeles, many nonblacks are members of other nonwhite "races." This preliminary analysis also overlooks other ethnic identities which should be included in a more comprehensive assessment of segregation. In particular, persons identified by the census as of Spanish origin are here included mainly in the nonblack category. Another limitation of the analysis reported here is the restriction to cities. Many of the dynamics of residential segregation have to do with racial and ethnic patterns of suburbanization. This analysis considers only the patterns of segregation among those blacks and nonblacks who at the time of the census resided in the central city (except for Nashville, which in 1980 census reports is merged with Davidson County). Future reports from this research project will take account of these racial, ethnic, and geographic complexities.

*] Sorensen, A., K. Taeuber, and L. Hollingsworth, Jr., "Indexes of Racial Residential Segregation for 109 Cities in the United States, 1940 to 1970," Sociological Focus 8 (April, 1975): 125-142; Taeuber, K., and A. Taeuber, Negroes in Cities (Chicago: Aldine, 1965).

Table 1. Measures of Residential Segregation for Cities with Black Population of More than 100,000 in 1980[1]

City	Population (in thousands)		Percent Black	Segregation Index (Dissimilarity)		% Living in Homogeneous Blocks		Exposure Index	
	Total	Black		1980	1970	Blacks	Nonblacks	Blacks to Nonblacks	Nonblacks to Blacks
New York, NY	7,071	1,784	25	75	77	1	31	30	10
Chicago, IL	3,005	1,197	40	92	93	20	59	8	5
Detroit, MI	1,203	759	63	73	82	12	28	14	24
Philadelphia, PA	1,688	639	38	88	84	14	64	12	8
Los Angeles, CA	2,967	505	17	81	90	4	33	29	6
Washington, DC	638	448	70	79	79	12	10	9	22
Houston, TX	1,594	440	28	81	93	25	43	20	8
Baltimore, MD	787	431	55	86	89	21	47	10	12
New Orleans, LA	557	308	55	76	84	25	32	15	19
Memphis, TN	646	308	48	85	92	35	47	12	11
Atlanta, GA	425	283	67	86	92	28	32	7	14
Dallas, TX	904	266	29	83	96	25	48	18	7
Cleveland, OH	574	251	44	91	90	18	67	8	6
St. Louis, MO	453	206	46	90	90	22	67	8	7
Newark, NJ	392	192	58	76	76	9	18	14	20
Oakland, CA	339	159	47	59	70	2	7	30	27
Birmingham, AL	284	158	56	85	92	46	51	10	12
Indianapolis, IN	701	153	22	83	90	17	56	22	6
Milwaukee, WI	636	147	23	80	88	6	50	25	7
Jacksonville, FL	541	137	25	82	94	41	46	19	6
Cincinnati, OH	385	130	34	79	84	7	34	21	11
Boston, MA	563	126	22	80	84	3	43	27	8
Columbus, OH	565	125	22	75	86	7	32	31	9
Kansas City, MO	448	123	27	86	90	18	55	17	6
Richmond, VA	219	112	51	79	91	32	31	15	15
Gary, IN	152	108	71	68	84	29	19	14	34
Nashville, TN[2]	456	106	23	80	90	17	40	24	7
Pittsburgh, PA	424	102	24	83	86	13	52	20	6

[1] Segregation measures are based on the census count of black and nonblack persons in each city block.

[2] Census data for Nashville in 1980 include all of Davidson County.